

**Epi Update for Friday, October 11, 2019**  
**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)**  
**Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

Items for this week's Epi Update include:

- Update on outbreak of severe respiratory illnesses associated with vaping
- What is *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*?
- Program area spotlight: Field epidemiologists
- In the news: Three STDs reach all-time highs in the U.S., new CDC report says
- In the news: Ten years ago, swine flu ushered in the era of drug-store flu shots
- In the news: The toll mounts from a mystery disease some call "the new polio"
- Infographic: The lowdown on how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases

**Update on outbreak of severe respiratory illnesses associated with vaping**

Nationwide there are now 1,299 reported cases of severe respiratory illnesses associated with vaping, including 26 deaths. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has shared updated interim guidance for evaluating and caring for these patients. This includes information on initial evaluation, hospital admission criteria, patient follow-up, considerations for high-risk groups, and clinical and public health recommendations. The guidance can be found at [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6841e3.htm?s\\_cid=mm6841e3\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6841e3.htm?s_cid=mm6841e3_w).

In Iowa, 38 cases have been reported, with more currently under investigation. No deaths have been reported. Most cases (33) report vaping illicit THC products; the rest report using only nicotine products or the product used is not known. IDPH continues to work with clinical and public health partners to investigate these cases. Iowans should not use vaping and e-cigarette products, since the cause of this outbreak is not yet clear and the long-term health impacts of these products are unknown. Anyone who has been vaping or using e-cigarette products and is having trouble breathing should seek medical care. Health care providers should ask patients about the use of vaping and e-cigarette products and report suspected cases of severe respiratory illness associated with these products to IDPH at 1-800-362-2736 (State Patrol after-hours: 515-323-4360).

For more information, visit [idph.iowa.gov/ehi/lung-disease-vaping](http://idph.iowa.gov/ehi/lung-disease-vaping).

**What is *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*?**

*Mycoplasma pneumoniae* is a bacteria that can cause several different types of illness, most commonly a chest cold or tracheobronchitis. Common symptoms include sore throat, fatigue, fever, headache, mild pneumonia, and a gradual progression of cough severity up to weeks or months. Most people recover without antibiotics. *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* can occasionally cause more severe pneumonia or encephalitis. Those most at risk for *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* include school-aged children, young adults, persons who live and work in crowded settings, and those with weakened immune systems. The disease is most often spread from person to person via respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes. Symptoms generally begin one to four weeks after exposure. There is no vaccine to prevent *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*. Like with most respiratory illnesses, hand hygiene, covering your cough and staying home when ill are important to prevent spread.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/pneumonia/atypical/mycoplasma/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/pneumonia/atypical/mycoplasma/index.html).

## Program area spotlight: Field epidemiologists

Working under a team lead, the four-member team of field epidemiologists at IDPH are each assigned a region of the state where they work directly with local public health agencies, providing case investigation training and technical assistance for infectious disease. Additionally, field epidemiologists take infectious disease questions from health care providers and the public, providing recommendations for surveillance, control and prevention.

Field epidemiologists aid in the identification of outbreaks and lead outbreak investigations. These investigations require collaboration among internal partners at IDPH and external partners such as local public health agencies, Iowa's State Hygienic Laboratory, and the Department of Inspections and Appeals.

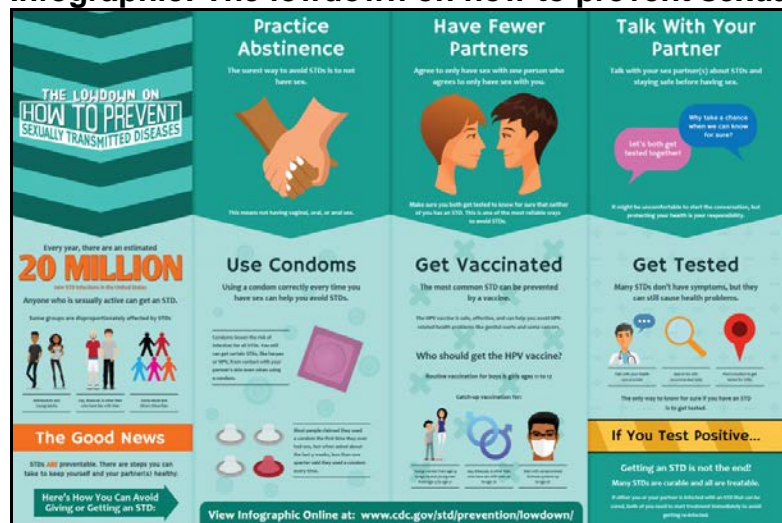
Field epidemiologists also have experience with data collection and analysis which allows them to contribute to the investigation of non-communicable, emerging health issues impacting Iowa, serving to strengthen epidemiological surge capacity throughout the state.

**In the news: Three STDs reach all-time highs in the U.S., new CDC report says**  
[www.cnn.com/2019/10/08/health/std-cases-rising-us-study/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2019/10/08/health/std-cases-rising-us-study/index.html)

**In the news: Ten years ago, swine flu ushered in the era of drug-store flu shots**  
[qz.com/1722940/ten-years-ago-h1n1-swine-flu-ushered-in-drug-store-flu-shots/](http://qz.com/1722940/ten-years-ago-h1n1-swine-flu-ushered-in-drug-store-flu-shots/)

**In the news: The toll mounts from a mystery disease some call "the new polio"**  
[time.com/5691114/afm-death-toll-mystery/](http://time.com/5691114/afm-death-toll-mystery/)

## Infographic: The lowdown on how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases



To view in full size, visit  
[www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/lowdown/the\\_lowdown\\_infographic\\_poster\\_30x20.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/lowdown/the_lowdown_infographic_poster_30x20.pdf).

**Have a healthy and happy week!**  
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
800-362-2736